

Why Do Some Partners Abuse?

Because they:

- may have learned this behaviour in their family of origin (many abusers have witnessed their fathers abusing their mothers);
- try to maintain a macho image reinforced by society and the media;
- believe it is an appropriate expression of power and control;
- want their partner to remain dependent on them;
- know there are few, if any, consequences for violent acts.

Why Do Some Partners Stay?

Because they:

- want their relationships to work and hope their partners will change;
- fear their partner will hurt them or seek revenge if they leave;
- feel guilt and shame;
- see no other alternative;
- are not aware that help is available;
- believe their partner needs them;
- do not have social or personal supports;
- believe a partner who is occasionally violent is better than no partner at all;
- believe the violence and abuse is normal
- think that the violence will go away after they get married.

How Can You Help Your Friend?

DO:

- believe your friend;
- listen calmly and take your friend's concerns seriously;
- reassure your friend that nobody deserves to be abused;
- support your friend in looking at the risks of more abuse;
- create an atmosphere of safety and trust;
- suggest her friend talk to a trusted adult such as a teacher, guidance counsellor or school psychologist, or call one of the agencies listed on this pamphlet;
- consult with local agencies listed on the back of this pamphlet;
- call the 24-hour Abused Women's Helpline 519-642-3000.

DON'T:

- believe the crisis has passed;
- sound shocked or embarrassed;
- make light of the situation;
- guarantee secrecy;
- take responsibility for support alone;
- emphasize how bad others will feel;
- make unrealistic promises.

In The Area of Prevention...Everyone Can:

- become more aware of verbal and physical abuse in their own relationships;
- help their friends "break the silence;"
- be aware of jokes, movies, TV, programs advertising, and videos that are demeaning to women and may promote abuse.

Local Agencies That Can Help

24-hour Helpline Numbers for Abused Women in the London/Middlesex area

- London 519-642-3000
- Strathroy 519-246-1526
- St. Thomas 519-633-0155
- Sexual Assault Centre London 519-438-2272
- Distress Centre 519-667-6711
- Mental Health Crisis Service . 519-433-2023
- Youth Helpline 519-660-4357
- Parent Helpline 1-888-603-9100

Counselling Services for Abused Women in the London and Middlesex area

- London Abused Women's Centre 519-432-2204
- Daya Counselling Centre 519-434-0077
- Family Service Thames Valley .. 519-433-0183
- Sexual Assault Centre London .. 519-439-0844
- Merrymount Children's Centre . 519-434-6848

Legal

- Legal Aid 519-433-8179
- Family Law Information Centre . 519-660-3001
- Probation & Parole 519-661-6631
- Victim/Witness Assistance Program 519-660-3041
- Crown Attorney's Office 519-660-3003
- Justice of the Peace (criminal) .. 519-661-1882
- Justice of the Peace (family) 519-660-3044
- Family Court 519-660-3044

Police

- Emergency 911
- General Information 519-661-5670
- Record Inquiries 519-661-5640
- Family Consultants 519-661-5636
- Criminal Investigation 519-661-5691
- Sexual Assault Section 519-661-5674
- Domestic Violence Coordinator 519-661-5674



London Abused Women's Centre
 797 York Street – Unit 5
 London ON N5W 6A8
 tel: (519) 432-2204 fax: (519) 679-3918
 email: info@lawc.on.ca

DATING and HOOKING UP RELATIONSHIPS

What You Should Know...

LAWC's definition of abuse in relationships: *intentionally using tactics including, but not limited to, emotional, psychological and physical abuse to establish and maintain power and control over the thoughts, beliefs, and conduct of your partner.*

Abuse can lead to serious injury, suicide and murder and is always emotionally destructive to both men and women.

Physical abuse and threats of violence are crimes. It is against the law to assault your partner, just as it is a crime to assault a stranger. Abusers can be jailed or fined if convicted. Police are required to lay charges when there is probable cause to believe an assault has occurred.

All forms of abuse are expressions of power. They are meant to control your partner both immediately and in the future through the use of fear and intimidation. Society tolerates partner abuse and specifically woman abuse through its acceptance of sexism in relationships. Men are permitted and encouraged to use force as a way to solve problems. Women are encouraged to take responsibility for the emotional needs of men and to assume blame when relationships break down.

Early Warning Signs of Abuse...

Are you dating, going out or hooking up with someone who:

- # is jealous and possessive of you, won't
- # let you have friends, checks up on you, won't accept breaking up?

Early Warning Signs of An Abuser (continued)

- # tries to control you by being bossy, giving orders, making all the decisions, doesn't take your opinion seriously?
- # is scary, you worry about how s/he will react to things you say or do, threatens you, uses or owns weapons?
- # is violent: has a history of fighting, loses temper quickly, brags about mistreating others?
- # pressures you for sex, is forceful or scary around sex, thinks you are a sex object, attempts to manipulate or guilt trip you by saying "if you really loved me you would...;" "no one will love you like I do," gets too serious about the relationship too fast?
- # abuses drugs or alcohol and pressures you to take them?
- # blames you when mistreating you, says you provoked him/her, pressed his/her buttons, made him/her do it, led him/her on?
- # has a history of bad relationships and blames the other person for all the problems, "girls just don't understand me?"
- # believes that men should be in control and powerful and that women should be passive and submissive?
- # uses the internet, i.e., facebook, myspace, to ruin your reputation?

If You Are Abused...

You are not alone and you are not to blame. You cannot control your partner's abuse, but there are ways you can be safer:

- # can call the police if you have been assaulted;
- # tell someone: talk to a doctor, nurse, teacher, counsellor, family member, neighbour or friend;
- # document the abuse by writing down the details as soon as possible after the assault;
- # use the list of resources in this brochure. Keep it in a safe, handy place where your partner won't find it;
- # develop a safety plan. Know all exits in your house to be used in an emergency. Memorize emergency numbers. Keep spare house and car keys handy. Know where you can stay in an emergency;
- # call a shelter for abused women (519-642-3000). Shelters can provide a safe place to stay in a crisis as well as information and counselling 24 hours a day, seven days a week;
- # if it is safe to do so, consider leaving the relationship as soon as possible;
- # recognize that no one has the right to control you and that it is everyone's human right to live without fear.

If You Are Abusive...

You are not alone. Violence may be learned from childhood or supported by society. You can learn less dangerous and damaging ways to feel that you are in control. Here are some things you should consider:

- # you need to take responsibility for your own behaviour. Your partner does not *make* you hurt her and is not responsible for your actions;
- # your behaviour may destroy your relationship or seriously injure someone you care about;
- # blaming the violence on drugs, alcohol or sickness and apologizing after the violence will not change your behaviour;
- # physical violence and threats of violence are crimes. You may face fines or imprisonment if convicted;
- # denying the abuse and resisting intervention will prevent you from getting help. Police and other professionals intervene to keep everyone safe. You can begin to change the way you act with the support of the resources listed in this pamphlet.

This pamphlet has been adapted from Middlesex Board of Education, "Violence in Relationships;" London Board of Education, "Violence in Relationships;" Interval House of Hamilton-Wentworth, "Dating Violence: What You Should Know;" and, London Abused Women's Centre "Dispelling the Myths"